

Six Pots from South Sulawesi

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ABSTRACT. The Australian Museum holds six earthenware pots, bought in Watampone (South Sulawesi, Indonesia) in 1937. They are terracotta in colour and decorated with deeply carved plant and geometrical motifs. This highly distinctive local style was developed by 1910 at the latest, and cannot be traced past 1937. A photograph and description published in 1921 suggest the prominent role of one woman. Several pots in this style, now held in European museums, bear inscriptions naming the potter responsible and giving the place of manufacture. A possible reading is suggested for the inscription on one of the Sydney pots. Taken as a whole, the pots represent the combination of an indigenous technique with a long history, Islamic decorative motifs and forms influenced by European models. This in turn reflects the historical and cultural circumstances in which they were made.

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In 1937, F.D. McCarthy was in South Sulawesi, then known as South Celebes. It was an exciting time to visit this part, seemingly of growing importance, of the Netherlands East Indies. Although Dutch contact with the area went back to the early 17th century and reasonably extensive territorial control, won through conquest, had begun later in that century, the full opening up of the interior had to wait until the first decade of the 20th century when a combination of ethical aspiration and increasing technological superiority led the colonial power into a policy of definitive conquest. Another element in Dutch policy was research into all aspects of the natural and human world of the Indies, as much for the purposes of enlightened colonial administration as for the sake of pure knowledge. Along with much else, this led to the foundation of an Archaeological Service which, in due course, came to investigate prehistoric sites in South

Sulawesi. The results of those investigations and the reasons which led McCarthy to be involved in them have been set out elsewhere (van Heekeren, 1958, 1972; McCarthy, 1984), and we need only note that it was this interest which brought him to South Sulawesi where he could purchase the pots with which this paper is concerned.

Acquisition

The Australian Museum was prepared to grant McCarthy leave from his normal duties for an overseas trip, but did not provide any funds to acquire items for its collections. Despite this, the opportunity to obtain examples of material culture was too good to discourage an anthropologist who had always had a strong interest in artefacts. McCarthy's diary of his

time in South Sulawesi, which he has kindly allowed me to consult, vividly describes his concerns and the conditions of travel and work in that long past era.

On 11 July, 1937, McCarthy was taken to a market by Dr Willems, his associate from the Archaeological Service, and noted the range of goods available. On 13 August, at Cita (Tjita) where they were excavating, he resolved to buy examples of the 'pottery, cloths and knives' on sale. At Watampone, the old capital of the kingdom of Bone and then the administrative centre for a large area on the eastern side of the peninsula, on 2 September, he 'made arrangements with Controleur Batten to have some old type pottery made... at 25 cents per piece.' Four days later, another Dutch administrator, Groeneveld, undertook to collect 'model canoes, model rice house, wood carvings, pottery and baskets', though this collection never reached McCarthy who, shortly afterwards, became ill. The six pots now in the Australian Museum – and it is no small tribute to McCarthy's care that they reached Sydney intact – are probably those referred to on 2 September.

The diary entries confirm what might have been assumed from the general context of time and place: the artefacts were bought to illustrate the nature of 'native' life. That did not imply lack of change, for after all this was 'old type pottery', but the material was exotic for Europeans and therefore fit to be collected. As we shall see, however, these pots are rather more – and less – than specimens of traditional handicraft.

The Pots

The six pots clearly belong together as a group. They fall into three matching pairs in form, and the fabric and technique of manufacture for all six are the same. They are made of rather soft earthenware which has been exposed to a strong oxidising atmosphere in firing to produce an overall terra cotta colour. Occasional dark patches of reduction, so-called firing clouds, suggest open firing rather than kiln firing. The marks also show that the pots were fired upside down. There is no trace of glaze or slip. Despite some differences, all the pots are roughly globular in shape with an aperture at the top; from this aperture rises a neck which is surmounted by a cover (one of which has been lost). The main body of each pot seems to have been formed with a paddle and anvil and the neck has been made separately, then skilfully luted to the body. The earthenware is thick enough to allow a very distinctive form of decoration on the top half of the main body of each pot, on some of the necks and on the five remaining covers. With the clay still leather-hard, elaborate designs have been marked out by incised lines and sections of the design then carved out, to a depth of up to about 2 mm. The workmanship is of quite a high standard and the effect striking.

The decorative motifs are drawn from a limited repertoire. Terms used for these motifs in the following descriptions of the individual pots are defined in the later discussion of the decoration.



Fig.1. Australian Museum, Sydney, E.44348 (a) and (b).

(1) **E.44348 (a) and (b)** (Fig.1): large pot (a) with short neck. Height 250 mm, diameter 310 mm, height of neck 44 mm, diameter of lip 133 mm. The bottom half of the pot is plain with a flattened base. There are very slight reduction marks on the upper half and a large reduction mark on the lower half. The decoration begins at the point of maximum diameter with an incised scalloped line. Above this are seven triangles with simple incised patterns, then rhomboid facets, carefully decorated with sprigs and bands of crossed squares above and below inverted arcades. The number of arcade columns ranges from nine to 13. In the angles above the rhomboid facets are trapezoidal facets with carefully designed plant decoration of motif A. Above this are triangular spaces with a band of crossed squares and a sprig. Finally, adjacent to the neck, is a ring of crossed squares. The neck is plain.

The lid (b) is a simple inverted cone terminating in a knob. It fits over the lip of the pot. Height 66 mm, diameter at lip 170 mm, diameter of knob 53 mm. It is roughly made with clear finger mark depressions in the interior. The incised decoration comprises three bands, the central one being alternate sets of three oblique lines forming triangles, each of which contains several vertical slashes and small crescents. The outer

bands consist of oblique slashes. The top of the knob has an annular depression decorated with an outer scalloped line, vertical slashes and a double line ring around a small protuberance.

(2) **E.44349 (a) and (b)**. Large pot with short neck (a). Height 254 mm, diameter 310 mm, height of neck 42 mm, diameter of lip 133 mm. Slight reduction marks on upper half and a considerable mark on base. Shape and decoration match E.44348 (a) exactly. Slight irregularities on the interior demonstrate that the carving was done at the leather hard stage. The number of arcade columns on the main facets ranges from nine to 12. The lid (b) also matches E.44348 (b) in dimensions and decoration.

(3) **E.44350 (a) and (b)** (Fig.2). Medium sized pot with decorated neck (a). Height 245 mm, diameter 255 mm, height of neck 72 mm, diameter of lip 89 mm. The neck and upper half has a large, but light reduction mark; there are two strong reduction marks near the flattened base. The neck is rather thick and uneven on the interior. The decoration begins at a vertical height of about 78 mm with an incised scalloped line. Above this are eight panels decorated with plant motif B. The width of these panels ranges from 90 mm to 107 mm. Triangular spaces above and below the junction of the



Fig.2. Australian Museum, Sydney, E.44350 (a) and (b).

panels are filled with sprigs. Adjacent to the neck is a ring of crossed squares. The neck is decorated with two bands, each made up of alternate sets of three oblique lines forming triangles with the double horizontal lines above, below and between the bands. Each triangle has a sprig. The lower band is in rather uneven eight-fold symmetry, while the upper band combines two triangles in one large one to produce seven-fold symmetry.

The lid (b) has an overall height of 75 mm. The upper section is essentially conical ending in a plain flat knob. Below this is a flat rim giving a maximum diameter of 100 mm and a vertical flange almost 30 mm deep and with a lip diameter of 50 mm. This flange fits inside the pot's neck. Decoration on the conical section consists of an incised scalloped line, surmounted by the incised markings for one band of crossed squares, but the pattern has not been carved out. Above this is another band of oblique slashes.

(4) **E.44351 (a)**. Medium sized pot with decorated neck. There was probably once a lid, but that has been lost. Height 239 mm, diameter 255 mm, height of neck 700 mm, diameter of lip 90 mm. Only slight reduction marks. The lip of the neck has been very carefully formed with a groove immediately above the upper decorated band. The overall decoration closely matches that on E.44350 (a). The width of the eight main panels ranges from 93 mm to 108 mm. Both bands on the neck are in eight-fold symmetry, but are not aligned with the main

panels.

(5) **E.44352 (a) and (b)**. Smaller pot with long neck (a). Vessels of this shape are known as water-monkeys. Height 242 mm, diameter 210 mm, height of neck 93 mm, diameter of lip 69 mm. A large reduction mark on the base and lower part of the pot. The neck is rather thick and uneven on the interior. The decoration begins at a vertical height of about 75 mm with an incised scalloped line and matches that on E.44350 (a) but on a smaller scale. The width of the eight main panels ranges from 75 mm to 82 mm. The two decorated bands on the neck are in six-fold symmetry. Between the upper band and the lip are two shallow grooves separated by a plain area about 20 mm high. As well as a small reduction mark, this bears an inscription in Bugis script, probably to be read *I.Ca.Mé.Ru*. The inscription (Fig.3) is discussed below.

The lid (b) has an overall height of 61 mm. The upper section is essentially conical ending in a plain flat knob. Below this is a flat rim giving a maximum diameter of 70 mm and vertical flange 23 mm deep and with a lip diameter of 38 mm. This flange fits inside the pot's neck. Decoration on the conical section, which is slightly convex, consists of an incised scalloped line, surmounted by the incised markings for inverted arcades, but the pattern has not been carved out. Above this is an incised line.

(6) **E.44353 (a) and (b)** (Fig.4). Smaller pot with long neck (a). Height 254 mm, diameter 220 mm, height of



Fig.3. Australian Museum, Sydney, E.44352 (a), showing inscription in Bugis script.

neck 95 mm, diameter of lip 66 mm. Again, the neck is rather thick and has finger impressions on the interior. The decoration closely matches that on E.44352 (a). The lowest scalloped line is 71 mm from the base. The width of the eight main panels (at a higher point) ranges from 69 mm to 75 mm. The two decorated bands on the neck are in five-fold symmetry.

The lid (b) matches the shape of E.44352 (b), but has an overall height of only 53 mm. The diameter of the rim is 71 mm. The vertical flange is 20 mm deep with a lip diameter of 38 mm. The decoration on the upper section, again rather convex, consists of an incised scalloped line, surmounted by the incised markings for a band of crossed squares, but the pattern has not been carved out. Above this is an incised line. It has a small reduction mark.

Local Comparisons

In examining the background of the six pots it is helpful to discuss technique of manufacture, form and

decorative motifs separately, before returning to consider the group as a single unit.

Technique of manufacture. The making of earthenware appears to be part of the general culture of early Austronesian-speaking societies and the earliest pottery in South Sulawesi dates to about 2500 B.C. (Bellwood, 1985:227). Later, though very poorly dated, material from the area displays elaborate impressed, incised and even cut-through decoration (van Heekeren, 1972:pls 101-102; Mulvaney & Soejono, 1970, 1971). Much of this is associated with cave burials. Examples of a class of carefully impressed and moulded earthenware are associated in inhumation burials with mainland stoneware dating to the 15th and 16th centuries A.D. (Tjandrasasmita, 1970). Though there is much more work to be done on understanding the earthenware traditions of South Sulawesi, there is no doubting the long background of pottery making in the society which produced the examples with which this paper is concerned. It is even possible to supply a more immediate background.



Fig.4. Australian Museum, Sydney, E.44353 (a) and (b).

One earlier reference, however, can probably be discounted. Liedermoy (1854:371-372), writing about the native crafts of Sulawesi in the 1830's, noted the manufacture, in the Dutch controlled areas near Macassar, of water containers, cooking ware and, particularly, incense burners 'with flower-work'. He drew comparisons in shape and the quality of the earthenware with red Chinese teapots, perhaps Yixing ware. This description is not sufficiently detailed to allow identification with particular items in museum collections or with modern styles made in this area. However, among the earthenware seen in an intensive archaeological survey of just the area referred to by Liedermoy, there were no sherds with comparable carved decoration (F.D. Bulbeck, personal communication). Moreover, there is further negative evidence for the use of this style of decoration in this area. Between 1848, when he arrived in South Sulawesi, and 1858, when he returned to The Netherlands to oversee the publication of his first dictionary, the Dutch scholar B.F. Matthes made a systematic collection of material culture which he illustrated in an *Ethnographische Atlas* (1859) and described in both Makasar and Bugis dictionaries. Much of the actual material is still available in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden as part of Series 37. The assemblage seems to represent what was available to Matthes in areas under Dutch control. It contains only two locally-made earthenware pots of possible relevance (37-31, 37-33) and both of these have quite different, impressed decoration.

By a fine irony, there were carved earthenware pots at this time just where Matthes had longed to go, but had been denied access on several occasions (van den Brink, 1943:44-47). The Dutch government, after what it took to be considerable provocation, sent forces to invade Bone in 1859 which, in the course of operations, carried off a good deal of rather trivial booty from the court. Amongst this were two small, lobed 'melon' pots now in the Leiden museum (1926 - 545 and 1926 - 710). These are described and illustrated in Juynboll (1922:21, pl.7, figs 1,2). Though different from the Sydney pots in several respects, they are the two earliest dated pieces with a direct relationship. Most importantly, on each lobe there is a panel of carved decoration. One of these pots (1926-545) is a light brown colour with some minor dark areas of reduction, while the other (1926-710) has been almost wholly reduced to an overall black surface, though some minor chips and abrasion show brown beneath.

Many other closely allied pots can be found in museums and private collections dated to the remainder of the century. They show a range of impressed and carved decoration and come from several places across the peninsula, including Bone. However, to find close parallels to the Sydney pots in technique - as in form and decoration - it is necessary to come forward to the first decade of this century. The Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde in Rotterdam holds two reddish 'melon' pots with carved floral motifs in panels (17656, 17657). They are very similar to the Sydney pots, but not quite identical, while fitting easily into the existing tradition.

They came into the museum from a collector called Affelen in June, 1910 and are provenanced to Bone. More significantly, a further six pots are illustrated by Nieuwenhuis (1913:pl.27a-f) which are said to have come from Bone and to have been sent to an exhibition in Brussels in 1910, from where they were moved to a Dutch colonial military academy in Kampen. When this was closed in 1924, they appear to have been sold (van der Vlis, 1975); item f may be the same as Leiden 4005-14, received from a private collection in 1964 and very doubtfully provenanced to the Kai Islands. Among these six, the pots marked a, c and d are 'melon' pots indistinguishable in technique and decorative motifs from the Sydney pots. Two further 'melon' pots, e and f, are similar to others in the general tradition. The sixth, marked b, is remarkable in that it is lacking the usual 'melon' pot neck and has unusually large floral panels.

Technically, the most significant link between Kampen pots a, c and d and the Sydney pots is a particularly crisp style of carving and probably, since it is hard to tell in the monochrome photograph and the text is not entirely specific, the terracotta colour from the oxidising firing. This similarity is confirmed by consideration of form and decoration and, as we shall see, there was a considerable amount of this ware produced over the next three decades.

Form. The most common form for carved earthenware is the 'melon' pot, a roughly globular container with a small, flattened base and flat area on top around a short vertical or slightly flaring neck. The body of the pot is often lobed. Diameters range from about 100 mm to about 250 mm, with many examples near the mid-point of that range. Height ranges from about 80 mm to 200 mm. The two pots taken from Bone in 1859 are small examples of the type.

Many pots of this form with a variety of clay, colour and decoration are found in Sulawesi. They are usually described as being containers for drinking water, but there seems to be no direct observation of their use. The smaller examples would not hold much liquid, though the porosity of the earthenware would cool the water through evaporation.

Other common uses for earthenware vessels in South Sulawesi are as incense burners and for various ceremonial offerings. In 1972 I saw a small, black carved pot in the shape of a square goblet being used to burn incense in a house in Watampone. It was said to be old. Kallupa and others (1989:99) report carved votive pots at the Petta Balubue dolmen in Soppeng, but again there is no firm evidence for their age.

Decorative motifs. There are six motifs which together make up almost all the decoration on the Sydney pots. These are illustrated in Figure 5. More or less exact parallels for each of these motifs can be found on many pots from the general tradition, but what is distinctive is their combination. All six motifs appear on the Kampen pots a, c and d.

Dating the Style

The 1910 arrival in Europe of the two Rotterdam pots mentioned above (17656-17657) and the six Kampen pots marks the latest possible date for the beginning in Bone of the particular style to which the Sydney pots may be assigned. At the other extreme, the style cannot be shown to have endured beyond McCarthy's visit in 1937, though many examples of it did not reach museums until much later. McCarthy's description of the material as 'old type pottery' is relevant here.

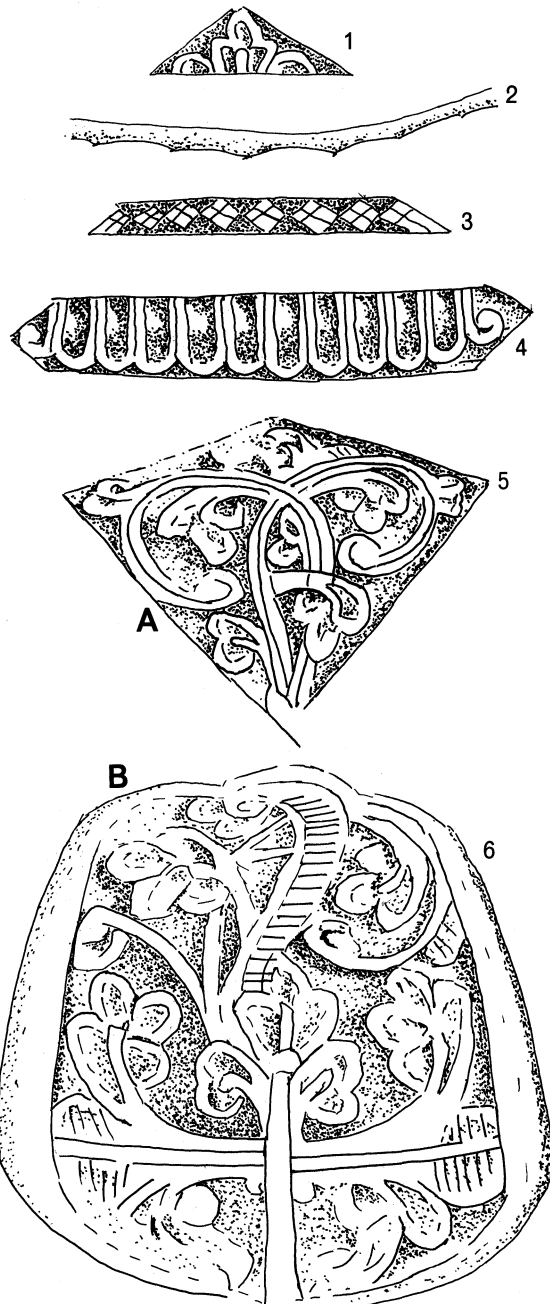


Fig.5. Decorative motifs on the Australian Museum pots: i) sprig; ii) scalloped line; iii) crossed squares; iv) inverted arcade; v) plant motif A; and vi) plant motif B.

On 30 March, 1921, the semi-popular journal *Indië*, published in The Netherlands, contained an item in a series of local notes about Bone by F.J. van der Lijke-Prins, apparently the wife of a colonial official:

Only occasionally could one obtain Bone earthenware in the market, yet there was a great demand for precisely this. Two old women alone thoroughly understood the craft of modelling the red clay and, of these, the one in the photograph was the better craftswoman. In her hands, the red-brown clay was modelled into various forms and she then engraved into it, with a pointed little piece of bamboo, the most ingenious figures and designs. These were perfectly symmetrical without any measuring device. The original forms of *gendi* (water jar) and *tampat* (receptacle) for weaving shuttles were being gradually superseded by the European forms of vases and items of use – which was a pity. However, the latter were more sought after in trade and it certainly paid our potter to modernise her craft to some extent. (after van der Lijke-Prins, 1921:820-821)

The accompanying photograph (Fig.6) shows a local woman with her tools of trade, at least 14 completed pots and another two apparently ready to be decorated. In her right hand she holds the engraving tool and a paddle rests on either knee. The container at the rear of the pots on the right appears to be a woven basket, though its contents and function are uncertain. The photograph is too indistinct to allow identification of particular pieces, but the repertoire of form and decoration includes all the elements found in the Sydney pots, though not in the same combination. There is no indication of when the photograph was taken. The reference in the text and the obviously posed arrangement suggest that it was taken in association with the writing of the article and this is unlikely to have been much before 1921.

Museum accession dates for several other examples of the style suggest a similar period of manufacture. In the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, there is a series of 11 pots acquired in 1912 from the German ethnologist, Grubauer, who collected them in Watampone (IC 38518 a-k). Similarly, the Rotterdam museum has a lid from Bone (22955) which it was given in April, 1915. A jug, very similar to that in the front left of Figure 6, and a small vase came into the Leiden museum in March, 1924; they are provenanced to Pampanua, between Watampone and Sengkang (2054-3 and 4). Further examples have continued to come into various Dutch museums from private collections until at least the 1970's. The ethnographic collection of the Museum Nasional in Jakarta contains at least three relevant items (169431, 21337, 23864) which were received at comparable dates.

Inscriptions

A remarkable feature of many of these pots is an inscription, usually on the base, identifying the potter and place of manufacture. A good example is shown in Figure

7 on a heavily decorated jar acquired by the Leiden museum in 1973 (4628-3). The two lines of Bugis script read *Tanaé ri Boné/natappa I Cabondéng*; that is, 'The land of Bone/I Cabondéng formed'. The prefix *I* in this context indicates a woman and *Cabondéng* seems to be a nickname meaning something like 'Little Stumpy'. It is not clear whether the first line merely indicates place, which seems more likely given the examples using Latin script discussed below, or whether it refers to the actual clay of the pots. The Bugis letters for the first word in the second line can also be read *natapa* which means 'roasted' and this could just refer to the firing of the pot, but the reading *natappa*, 'formed', is preferred by knowledgeable native speakers and gives better sense.

Dutch museums hold a further 15 inscribed pots, all sharing other features of the style. There is a high degree of standardisation, and some interesting variation, within this corpus of inscriptions. Some of this variation is trivial. For example, a beautifully carved, lidded pot supported on three legs was acquired by the Prinsessehof Museum in Leeuwarden between 1917 and about 1930 (GAM911). Its inscription is identical with that above except for the omission of the prefix *I*. A companion incense burner with the same history (GAM912) has a one line inscription on the base *Tana Boné nawinru I Kamaka*. The transcription of the name at the end is uncertain and the sign for the final syllable is displaced. The omission of *ri* in the first phrase is an error of

syntax, but the word *nawinru* which means 'made' is an easy substitution by another potter.

A series of 13 pots in the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, given in 1948 and said to come from Bone, presents an excellent opportunity to study the work of I Cabondéng. The collection includes a wide range of forms. Stylistically, all are very similar and closely linked with many other pots. The most interesting feature of the series, however, is that eight of the items are inscribed and some of these inscriptions contain errors. A large vase with three legs (1800-6) and the candlestick (1800-12) have inscriptions identical with that on the Leiden pot (4628-3). The texts on a large globular pot with three legs (1800-1) and on a cylindrical vase, now lost but which had an inscription recorded (upside down) on its catalogue card (1800-7), are also the same except for the omission of *I*, as already noted on one of the Leeuwarden pots (GAM911). It is possible that this last pot is that illustrated in Wagner (1949:127). Two other items which share a text are a jug (1800-10) and a bowl (1800-11): the *I* is omitted and in the first line there is a spelling error. The vowel marker comes after, instead of before, the third syllable character, thus giving a meaningless word *Tanao*. Another cylindrical vase (1800-8) has an inscription which omits the *I* and reverses the vowel markers in both *Boné*, which becomes *Béno* and *Cabondéng*, which becomes *Cabéno*. The eighth inscription, on a shallow tray which could be an ashtray



Fig.6. A Bone potter, her tools and wares. From photo in van der Lijke-Prins, 1921:821.

(1800-13), reads *Cabondéng majama riBodé*. The word *majama*, 'worked', is another easy substitution, while the final syllable should be *—né*.

This is not the end of I Cabondéng's spelling problems. In the Rotterdam museum are three more inscribed pots. These all use Latin letters, in addition to the Bugis. In the centre of the ring-foot of a rather strange square vase (34036) bought in 1954 is the name (in Bugis) *I Cabondéng* over the word (in Latin capitals) *BONE*, followed by a short, vertical stroke. A water-monkey (52158), given in 1960 by an engineer who seems to have been in Bone in the late 1930's, has a similar inscription, but the Bugis reads *I Bondéng*. On a jar with sloping handles (34035), probably associated with the other pot bought in 1954, the process has gone even further. The word (in Latin capitals) *BONE*, followed by a short vertical stroke, is written above a Bugis *I* and the Latin capitals *ONE* and a stroke (Fig.8).

It is difficult not to associate the name I Cabondéng with the woman shown in Figure 6. The pots signed by her display an impressive consistency of style and skill and some of the items shown in the photograph closely resemble signed pots or others closely-linked stylistically.

Two other inscribed pots in the Leiden museum present further problems. Both come from a group of seven pots presented in 1947 and provenanced only to South Sulawesi. Though all have carved decoration, they are rather varied in technique and style. Only one, a tall vase with a wavy lip (2631-7), is similar to the red pots with which this paper is chiefly concerned and even this is covered with an uncharacteristic creamy wash. On the base is clearly written (in Bugis) what seems to be a name *I Cabe'* or *I Cabeng* over (in Latin capitals) *BONE* and a stroke (Fig.9). The other inscribed pot in this series is a small, black, six-lobed 'melon' pot with very deeply carved floral decoration (2631-5); on the base are inscribed four Bugis characters, possibly *Pu.Ri.Si.Sa*, but the vowel markers are very indistinct and no meaning is clear. The significance of these two pots is that they show a wider habit of inscribing earthenware.

This brings us back to the inscription on the neck of Sydney pot E.44352 (a) (Fig.3). Its position near the lip of the neck is unusual and the script is not nearly as clear as in most other examples. A tempting interpretation is to read this as a name *I Caméru. Méru* is an Old Bugis word which seems to mean 'tall' or 'high' and, given the tightly controlled context, there could even be a contrast with the sense of *I Cabondéng*, or Little Stumpy. It is worth recalling that the 1921 account spoke of two women.

Reasonably extensive inquiries in Bone and elsewhere in South Sulawesi on several trips over the last two decades have failed to elicit any further reliable information on this style of earthenware and its makers. Nor is it mentioned in recent works such as *Proyek Rehabilitasi* (1977-1978) or Newman (1977:191-214).

The Wider Context

We are now in a position to consider the six Sydney pots within a wider context. In their particular combination of technique, form and decoration, they epitomise an amalgam of several cultural traditions.

The manufacture of earthenware pottery is widespread throughout the Austronesian-speaking areas of South-east Asia and, as discussed above, has a long history within South Sulawesi. Gasser's survey (1969) indicates the range of variation across the archipelago, but is incomplete and unreliable in detail. Outside South Sulawesi, at least two other areas share the technique of carved decoration at the leather-hard stage. In 1909 both the Leiden and Rotterdam museums received a globular pot and a *kendi* from the same collector provenanced to north Flores (Rotterdam 16376, 16389; Leiden 1710/54, 78). All four items are heavily potted and decorated with shallow carved decoration, much simpler in design and rougher in execution than the South Sulawesi material (Leiden 1710/54 is illustrated



Fig.7. Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, 4628-3, detail of base.

in Fischer & Rassers, 1924:pl.2). Much closer technical parallels are found in carafe-shaped vases made on the east coast of Sumatra. Two fine examples were shown in Amsterdam in 1883 and are now in the Indonesisch Ethnographisch Museum in Delft (230/165, 166; the former is illustrated in Anon., 1968:90, item 378). The combination of techniques is very similar to the South Sulawesi pots, but the overall style is quite different. It is notable that all these other examples are, in form, entirely local. Loeber (1915:77-78) lists some other comparable pieces from various places in the archipelago, but I have not seen all the pieces to which he refers.

Material from the Kai Islands is particularly interesting, but deserves much further study. There was clearly much movement of people and goods, as well as ideas, between South Sulawesi and the Kai Islands. Of the two pots illustrated by Nieuwenhuis (1913:pl.27g,h) and said to come from Bulukumba, one (h) was certainly made in the Kai group and brought to South Sulawesi, while the other (g) is a remarkably close match to one which must have been made in South Sulawesi, but was collected in the Kai Islands (Amsterdam A1066, discussed by Planten & Wertheim, 1893:190-191 and illustrated in Pleyte, 1893:pl.vii, fig.1). A similar case of trade is a lobed 'melon' pot with carved floral decoration received by the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich in 1895 (95.367); it was indubitably made in South Sulawesi but collected in Aceh.

We have already seen in van der Lijke-Prins' account quoted above that the Bone potters were 'modernising', especially by changing the forms of their product. Both in the accompanying photograph (Fig.6) and in the museum items inscribed by I Cabondéng, we may note such obvious examples of this process as a candlestick,

a jug and some of the stranger vases. These changes may have reflected the direct influence of Europeans, such as van der Lijke-Prins herself, or have arisen in response to a more widespread demand for the accoutrements of modern life. The six Sydney pots do not display such unmistakable influence on their form and one could argue that they might be derived from 'melon' pots. However, their links with other pots suggest caution and some possible sources of influence present themselves.

A feature common to four of the Sydney pots, and several others in the tradition, is a more or less tall, cylindrical neck. The two Sydney examples with longer necks (E.44352 (a), E.44353 (a)) have been called water-monkeys above. Although the shape has considerable similarity with that of the traditional *kendi*, the absence of a spout is a crucial difference. It is easy to find parallels in the glazed wares of China and mainland South-east Asia, often with floral decoration as well, and one could safely presume that some such pieces reached South Sulawesi one way or another. However, by far the best comparison is with a fine, earthenware pot illustrated by Matthes in his *Ethnographisches Atlas* of 1859 (pl.10, fig.9) and now in the Leiden museum (37-35) (see Juynboll, 1922:pl.5, fig.1 for a better illustration). The body of the pot is covered with raised vertical branches of foliage and there are two raised rings on the neck. The light brown body is covered with a pink slip, and on the base is a partly illegible stamp clearly indicating European manufacture. In size and general proportions, this could have served as a rough model for the Bone pots of half a century and more later.

The other noteworthy feature of the pots' form is the faceting, as seen on the two larger Sydney pots (E.44348 (a) and E.44349 (a)) and on several other pots in the



Fig.8. Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde, Rotterdam, 34035, detail of base, inscriptions.

style such as the Kampen pot c. A brass kettle from Luwu and now in the Rotterdam museum (34486) has large facets around its body and provides a faint comparison from South Sulawesi. A pot with both a long neck and faceted decoration can be seen behind the jug on the left of Figure 6, and it is tempting to identify this with the splendid pot given to the Leiden museum by H.F. Damsté in 1939 (2410-30).

Finally, there is the decoration on the pots to be considered. The range of parallels here is almost endless, but a case can be made for a general Islamic inspiration. A good place to start is with the two lobed 'melon' pots carried off from Bone in 1859, as described above. The panels on one of these pots (Leiden 1926-710) contain rather crudely carved foliage. The four main panels on the other (Leiden 1926-545) contain stylised Arabic characters of which the only intelligible part are the letters *li'llah*, meaning 'of God', at the top and bottom of each panel. Another pot from Bone, shown in the Paris exhibition of 1878, also had a Muslim formula in Arabic characters, but it cannot now be located in the Leiden museum (300-963; Juynboll, 1922:20-21). A 'melon' pot in the Jakarta museum (probably 20321) has alternate lobes decorated with a floral motive and *li'llah*. A conical, black vase in Leeuwarden (GAM 782) also combines floral motifs with *li'llah* in the decoration of facets on its side and uses the Arabic letters within a star on its base.

The designs of leaves, flowers and various geometrical motifs found on other carved 'melon' pots are, in

themselves, unremarkable and there is little point in tracing minute parallels with elements in the suite of motifs illustrated in Figure 5. Although some of the work attributable to I Cabondéng and her fellow-potters in Bone between about 1910 and 1937 displays a few other plant motifs, the whole corpus is essentially similar in decorative style.

The explicit Arabic characters on one of the 1859 pots draw attention to the inverted arcade motif on two of the Sydney pots (E.44348 (a) and E.44349 (a)) and many others in the style. This can be plausibly read as an extended form of the Arabic characters as is suggested on the museum card for the Leiden pot 2410-30. It is worth noting, however, the use of a similar uninverted arcade motif around the neck of Leiden 2410-31.

Comparable plant and geometrical motifs are found on the wide range of metalwork, such as the kris scabbards and betel-boxes commonly used by Bugis, or on many other objects made in an Islamic context across the archipelago and beyond. The vases from the east coast of Sumatra referred to above are also decorated with a combination of plant and geometrical motifs. Another example in earthenware is the tile, with a panel of deeply carved plant decoration, from Trawulan in east Java, probably from the period when Muslim influences begin to appear in Javanese art (Muller, 1978:91, pl.173), though this reminds us just as well of the general Hindu symbolism of plants (Bosch, 1960). Many parallels could also be drawn with the underglaze, painted designs on Chinese and Vietnamese ceramics so widely and so long



Fig.9. Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, 2631-7, detail of base.

available throughout South-east Asia, and it should be remembered that much of the decoration on such export wares was influenced by Muslim taste. Yet perhaps it is stretching comparisons too far to include, for example, the Northern Song Cizhou wares with carved, floral decoration (e.g., Mino, 1981:pl.9) or unglazed Yixing ware with floral motifs (e.g., Jörg, 1983:pl.57).

Conclusions

The several cultural traditions drawn together in the style of these pots made in Bone earlier this century reflect the history of the society. It was still overwhelmingly made up of the local Bugis people with a lively sense of their culture stretching back to the legendary days well before any Islamic or European influence. In 1611, after repeated wars with the rising Makasar state of Gowa, Islam was imposed by force. The troubles of the later 17th century certainly brought many people from Bone into close contact with Europeans, but despite many troubles and several brief periods of Dutch and British occupation in the 19th century, the state retained effective independence until the final Dutch invasion of 1905. There is a sense in which all this history is represented in the pots: the earthenware technology of the Austronesian-speaking peoples, the Islamic character of the decoration, and the European derivation of the forms.

Yet it could be misleading to see them as a cultural expression of any great significance. The pots in museums show no signs of use, although given that they could be bought new in the market that may not signify much. More importantly, I have never come across material of exactly this style in South Sulawesi in recent years, whether in daily use, in museums, in the extensive antique market or even as sherds. As noted above, not even the memory seems to remain. Other types of earthenware, including carved 'melon' pots, are collected and even sold, but the technique of carving decoration seems no longer to be used by contemporary potters. I am sceptical of two cases implying trade. The museum card associated with a splendid, faceted pot given to the Amsterdam museum from an estate in 1942 (1596-56, illustrated in Asia Institute, 1948: 156) says that the pot comes from the Kai Islands and, recognising its manufacture in Sulawesi, suggests that it was brought by traders. The other case is a pot in the Basel Museum für Volkerkunde (IIC 6669/1935), attributed to Banda (Anon., 1964:30, pt.6), which is very similar to Sydney E.44350 (a) and (b). If one considers the possible sources of the demand for the pots referred to by van der Lijke-Prins, these need not have been more than the local European population and those wishing to emulate them, or passing tourists collecting curios and ethnographers gathering material culture. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to suggest that I Cabondéng and her colleagues were cannily and imaginatively taking advantage of a very specialised market, and that would add a further layer of meaning to the pots.

It was reasonable for McCarthy in 1937 to imagine that he was acquiring specimens of traditional handicraft. We can now see that he was getting something rather more complicated. Even in these rather simple artefacts, one can read a little of the personal creativity and cultural transactions of the particular time and place. While the pots' aesthetic worth is, I must confess, a little questionable, their historical significance is considerable.

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